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Barred Olympics Advance Man Is Linked to KGB

Associated Press

The U.S. decision to deny a visa to the Soviet Union Olympic Committee's advance man for the summer Games in Los Angeles does not signal that Soviet athletes will also be denied entry, the State Department said yesterday.

Oleg Yermishkin, refused entry by the department Thursday, "was identified as a fairly high-ranking KGB official when he served as first secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Washington," said a department official, who declined to be identified.

Department spokesman John Hughes said the action, which he refused to discuss in detail, does not presage additional visa problems for Soviets participating in the Summer Olympics, which are to begin July 28.

"What we are seeking to block is ille-

gitimate activity," said Hughes, who added that Yermishkin's visa was denied "for internal-security and national-security grounds."

"In no way are we blocking legitimate activity. You have to accept the fact that we made a judgment in this case on grounds of internal security. It is solely a matter of the individual involved," he said.

The Soviets originally sought a six-month visa for Yermishkin, Hughes said, adding that the Soviets were told in December that Yermishkin would not be accepted for a six-month visa under conditions of complete diplomatic immunity.

Hughes said that the Soviets submitted Yermishkin's visa application Feb. 10 at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and that the United States rejected the application last Tuesday.

In Los Angeles, Games organizers said they are "deeply troubled" about the timing of the decision, which they described as "unfair."

"... We are puzzled by the length of time it took to make this decision," Peter V. Ueberroth, president of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, said in a statement.

Asked at a news conference if the incident might prompt the Soviets to boycott the Summer Games, Ueberroth said, "... I think they are far more resilient."

Yermishkin's duties as advance man would have included assisting the Soviet Olympic Committee in getting ready for the Games and preparing for the reception of Soviet athletes and sports officials. Soviet officials had no immediate reaction to the U.S. decision or the allegation that Yermishkin is a KGB agent.